

Opening remarks by Dr. Mamine

Introduction by Dr. Mamine on Discussion Point 2: Roles of Funding Agencies in Emergency Situations

Introduction on Discussion Point 2 „Essentials of Research Funding“(5-10 Min)

Dear colleagues,

Last year we had our first meeting. That meeting was quite significant in the way that it was the first occasion of this kind to exchange our experiences and opinions and to discuss mutual ways and concepts of research funding – beyond the cooperation which has already been implemented among many of the organizations which were represented. This holds also true for today´s meeting, I suppose. We agreed that in addition to the necessity for sufficient research funding and scientific freedom, we need more international/global cooperation for the future – which makes meetings like this very valuable.

The main topics of our discussion last year were: bottom-up basic research, top-down thematic programs, general needs and possibilities for multilateral cooperation and funding for global issues.

To give you a short summary of the results of our discussion, I would like to mention the following issues:

- Our discussion once again underlined the existence of a broad variety of bottom-up and top-down approaches as well as a balance in the procedure of funding instruments for science and research.
- Regardless of the diversity, all participants were convinced of the shared potential to fund projects together. There are already some concrete examples: the G8 HORCS initiative or so called "Kyoto Initiative" as the idea was born two years ago in Kyoto. The idea is that research consortia – for a pilot phase only from the participating G8 countries – can receive funding for their multilateral cooperation without administrative hurdles. The first call – when DFG functioned as call secretariat was on "Exascale Computing". This year we already had the second call on Material Efficiency and JSPS

took over the function as call secretariat. An open call without thematic requirements is aimed for in the future.

- The intended multilateral cooperation in the field of Green Innovation with JST was mentioned.

- We viewed the diversity of procedures and underlying principles as a chance for joint activities as it provides an opportunity to apply the respective mechanism to different issues.

- We exchanged our views regarding the need of global activities and regional cooperation. Examples are bi- and trilateral projects, the Mediterranean Union, the Baltic Sea countries, the multinational actions of the EU, and the ERC activities respectively. Let me refer to one recent development in this respect: The inauguration of Science Europe will take place on October 21st this year in Berlin.

- In dealing with global issues, we identified shared challenges which we face in our effort to create ideal conditions for

science and research. These include for example: the question of resources, the need for global infrastructure, allowing both diversity and competition, open access to grants as well as networking activities and incentives.

- Many of the “Grand Challenges” are in fact multinational or global challenges. What surely comes to all our minds immediately is the 11th of March 2011. It was a day which will be remembered for a long time – worldwide, but particularly in Japan. Necessary are for example significant scientific contributions in order to make renewable energy sources available and usable as well as framework requirements such as technical and electrical logistics and applications for smart electricity use. Furthermore, a broader tendency towards the abandonment of nuclear power is desirable on a global scale.

With the global challenges in mind I would like to highlight that we need multilateral long-term programs with a perspective of substantial growth. And we need funding for high risk / high impact research, which is also one proposed discussion point on our agenda for today.

In my opinion, the only real risk in 'high-risk research' would be to leave it undone and untried. I suppose that you agree with me that this type of research owns tremendous potential of innovation. But, naturally, 'high-risk research' does challenge funding organizations. An uncertain prospect of a scientific project makes it hard to judge its value and its benefits in advance. Thus, it is not easy for funding agencies to approve or disapprove funding for these projects.

It is well-known that having to take a decision, human beings tend to choose clarity over options with incalculable insecurities. This instance leaves two assignments to funding agencies and scientists:

- First, we need to build and sustain opportunities for researchers who want to follow up on a high-risk project.
- Second, we need to define criteria for our own handling of proposals and projects in the line of review and decision. Even more, programs for high-risk research should be an invitation to walk unknown paths and perform innovative research.

Defining criteria for review and decision is a complicated task and it gets more and more complicated the more funding agencies are involved. In this context, I would like to point out the NSF initiative to host a "Global Summit on Scientific Merit Review" in Washington DC mid of May 2012.

The goal of this global summit of the Heads of Research Councils from research intensive countries is to collectively develop and endorse a Statement of Principles on Merit Review. In the invitation I received, it is stated that "In developing these principles, we expect to identify best practices and standards that will cultivate multinational research cooperation among countries and across countries." The summit aims at establishing a permanent but virtual Global Research Council to promote the sharing of data and best practices for high-quality collaboration.

Now I would like to ask Dr. Anne Emig to give us some more details about the planned "Summit on Merit Review".

Thank you, Dr. Emig.

When we now split up into two groups with one rapporteur at each table, we kindly ask you to use the discussion also to address concrete examples of international cooperation, exchange ideas and information on already existing programs.

Are there any discussion topics you would like to add?